



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-00569

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Firearms Certificates - East Belfast

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Question

Could I have a breakdown of statistics for the number of firearms licenses legally held as of January 2011 in East Belfast.

Answer

The PSNI follow legislation set out in the Firearms (NI) Order 2004 in relation to firearm certificates. The control of firearms in Northern Ireland is exercised by the Chief Constable. Before a person can be authorised to hold a firearm certificate, the Chief Constable must be satisfied that the applicant:

Is not prohibited by law from possessing a firearm, is not of intemperate habits or unsound mind and is not, for any reason, unfit to be entrusted with a firearm.

Has good reason for purchasing, acquiring or having in their possession the firearm or ammunition in respect of which the application is made.

Can be permitted to have that firearm or ammunition in their possession without danger to public safety or to the peace.

Firearm certificates are only issued when specified criteria has been met.

Firearms Branch are unable to extract retrospective data from their database and have provided information for 15/03/11, the date the data was retrieved.

The number of firearms certificates as at 15/03/11 in East Belfast was 452.

Please see the breakdown below providing figures for the three station areas within East Belfast District Command Unit

Mountpottinger – 22 firearm certificates

Strandtown - 329 firearm certificates
Willowfield - 101 firearm certificates

The database figures change on a daily basis.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.